



# New Haven Democracy Fund

"To ensure that all the citizens of New Haven have a fair and meaningful opportunity to participate in the election of mayor."  
New Haven Code of General Ordinances, Chapter 2, Article XI, §2-821 • Established in 2007 • [democracyfund@newhavenct.net](mailto:democracyfund@newhavenct.net)



## DEMOCRACY FUND BOARD MEETING

6:00 pm Thursday March 18, 2021

Virtual Meeting via Zoom

New Haven Democracy Fund Board:

Sergio Rodriguez, Chair

James O'Connell

William Wynn

Aaron Goode

Democracy Fund Administrator: Alyson Heimer

Members of the Public: Madison Hahamy (NHI), Owen Tucker-Smith (YDN), Barbara Segaloff.

1. Call to Order & Attendance 6:17pm

2. Public Comment - Barbara Segaloff introduced herself as a representative of the Justin Elicker campaign.

3. Review of prior meeting minutes - January 2021

Motion to approve January minutes made by O'Connell. 3-0-0. (Goode absent for this vote, arrived at 6:28pm)

February 2021 minutes were tabled until April.

4. Report from the Chair

- a. The NHDF Budget request to the Board of Alders was included in both versions of the Mayor's budget at \$200,000. The Board had requested \$250,000 during the meeting with the Mayor's office in February. The Chair is hopeful that this will be enough to get us through a competitive year.
- b. Potential new Board member, James Bhandary - Alexander. Chair Rodriguez and Administrator Heimer met with Bhandary-Alexander earlier today, March 18th. He seems enthusiastic and well-informed. He currently works as a professor in Yale's School of Law and has experience with issue-based advocacy at the state level, and has New Haven community ties since 2007.

5. Administrator's Report

- a. Board Elections will be held at the next Monthly Meeting in April.  
Current Chair, Sergio Rodriguez, expressed interest in running for Board Chair again.  
O'Connell and Wynn are flexible with their positions but would like to remain vice chairs. Aaron is happy with the status quo.
- b. Municipal Elections Update - There is currently only one official candidate for Mayor in the City of New Haven, Justin Elicker. Their campaign team and treasurer have confirmed they have raised at least \$5,000. They have not yet filed a request for a grant or matching funding. A second individual, Karen Dubois-Walton has created an exploratory committee. Until that person chooses to become a candidate and switch her municipal filing to a candidate committee from an exploratory committee, the mayor's race is considered

"uncontested." The Democracy Fund has no purview or authority over exploratory committees for mayor. This means that no grants or matching funds can be awarded until such a time as there is a second candidate who has raised a minimum of \$5,000.

- c. Heimer has secured the participation of the New Haven Independent as a co-sponsor for the Mayoral Debate(s) in 2021. Additional partners usually include the Register, CTV, WTNH, League of Women Voters, Voz Hispana, New Haven Votes, and other community organizations. All groups interested in participating, cosponsoring, or tabling (if the event is held in public) are welcome to reach out to the Board or Administrator.
- d. Reminder of Resubmission of Board Appointments <https://newhaven.seamlessdocs.com/f/dtcwx29xgy03>

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#### 6. New Business

Administrator Heimer will determine with community partners possible dates for a mayoral debate. Dates will depend on what races are competitive, general or primary. The current thought is to have a debate telecast through CTV and set up online watch parties. We would be able to accept questions via social media and email to pose to the candidates. Traditionally, the Fund hosts one 'qualifying public forum' in which candidates participating in the Fund are required to participate. There is further discussion to be had about how to proceed with planning this event if the pandemic continues to hamper in-person gatherings. 2019's Debate was a huge success, and was held down town in Co-Op high school's beautiful auditorium run by the Shubert Theatre.

O'Connell motioned to adjourn. 4-0-0. Meeting adjourned at 6:58.